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# THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES.

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An Address Delivered Before the Illinois State Bar Association  
at Galesburg, Illinois, July 11, 1907,

BY

HON. CLARK E. CARR,  
OF GALESBURG.

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## SPECIAL ADDRESS.

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# THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES

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HON. CLARK E. CARR, OF GALESBURG.

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In one of his speeches during the great campaign of 1858 in Illinois, known as the Lincoln-Douglas debates, Mr. Lincoln said:

“Twenty-two years ago Judge Douglas and I became acquainted. We were both young then—he a trifle younger than I. Even then we were both ambitious, I perhaps quite as much so as he. With me, the race of ambition has been a failure—a flat failure; with him it has been one of splendid success. His name fills the nation, and is not unknown even in foreign lands. I affect no contempt for the high eminence he has reached. I would rather stand upon that eminence than wear the richest crown that ever pressed a monarch’s brow.”

### MR. LINCOLN’S STRUGGLES.

As Mr. Lincoln said, he was ambitious, but never did a young man struggle for success under so many embarrassments, and few have been so many times disappointed.

He was, as a young man, awkward and ungainly, and of the subjects taught in the schools he knew little. There are now in Illinois few school boys of ten years old that are not better informed in what are called the common branches than was Abraham Lincoln at twenty.

But even then, Abraham Lincoln was by no means ignorant. He had read all the books he could get, among which were the Bible, the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” and Weems’s Life of Washington. He was always an inquirer. From those with whom

he came in contact he was always learning. This continued so long as he lived.

Mr. Lincoln, as he grew older, became ambitious to hold office. The place he held longest was that of member of the Illinois legislature, to which he was elected and re-elected four times. Finally he was elected to the lower house of congress. Then he seemed to be upon the high road to success.

But this proved to be a disappointment. While he voted for supplies to the army, he disapproved of the Mexican war, then being fought, and frankly so declared. The war spirit was on and on account of the opinions he expressed his re-election was not even considered.

When he left congress on March 4, 1849, or more properly speaking, when he was left out of congress, he renounced politics, and, returning to his dingy law office, devoted himself to his practice, riding the circuit as before, intending to devote himself to his profession the remainder of his life.

But in the winter of 1854 he was aroused to such a sense of duty that he could not refrain from returning to politics.

#### REPEAL OF MISSOURI COMPROMISE.

The Missouri compromise line, that great barrier against slavery, was menaced, and it was finally assailed by the most potential man in congress, by Senator Douglas, under the plea that the people should be allowed to prohibit or introduce slavery, as the majority should determine, under the doctrine of what he called "Popular Sovereignty." Mr. Lincoln was, as were all the free soil men, alarmed. He was opposed to the extension of slavery at all, even if the people of a territory wanted it. Besides, he distrusted Senator Douglas, and felt by no means confident that, with the great barrier removed, he still would not, under the influence of the South, force slavery upon a new territory against the will of her people.

Mr. Lincoln watched with intense interest the struggle in congress, which resulted in the free soil men being defeated and

overwhelmed by the repeal of the Missouri compromise and the overthrow of the great barrier against slavery.

In the senate the vote stood, yeas 37, nays 14. In the house it stood, yeas 113, nays 100.

The bill was carried through both houses by the majestic potentiality of Senator Douglas. Outraged and stunned by what he regarded as a great wrong, Mr. Lincoln could not refrain from denouncing the measure. He was unknown beyond the limits of Illinois, but in Illinois he was the leader in turning the people against the Nebraska bill.

General Shields' term in the senate was about to expire. Notwithstanding the almost superhuman efforts of Senator Douglas who proclaimed from every stump in Illinois that he "would fairly and honestly carry out the principles of the Kansas-Nebraska bill," and that the will of the people should govern, the legislature of Illinois was carried against Judge Douglas and his Nebraska bill, on joint ballot, by a majority of seven, insuring the defeat of General Shields, Senator Douglas' colleague and supporter, and making possible the election of an anti-Nebraska bill man as his successor.

#### HIS DISAPPOINTMENT.

Then came Mr. Lincoln's greatest disappointment. Above all things else he wanted to be a United States senator. He wrote to Norman B. Judd: "I would rather have a full term as United States senator than the presidency."

Of the 52 anti-Nebraska votes in that legislature, Mr. Lincoln received 45. This continued for ten ballots, on every one of which he hoped to be elected. Finally he became satisfied that, unless he withdrew, the anti-Nebraska democrats (who still held so much allegiance to their old party that they could not support an old line Whig) would go over to Governor Matteson, a Douglas Democrat, and elect him. Mr. Lincoln withdrew, and Lyman Trumbull, an anti-Nebraska Democrat, was elected.

Never was there such magnanimity in politics, never such

generosity. Mr. Lincoln knew that in order to reap the fruits of the victory the new party had so gallantly achieved, an anti-Nebraska man must be elected. It is said that Judge Stephen T. Logan, then the foremost Illinois lawyer, shed tears when, at Lincoln's earnest solicitation, he withdrew his name. Ninety-nine hundredths of his party wanted Mr. Lincoln elected, and still, to make sure of a senator whom he knew would represent the views of the new party, he withdrew.

#### MR. LINCOLN WITHDREW.

With a smile upon his lips and an admonition to his friends to stand firm for principle, from the portals of the United States senate, whose doors seemed to be opening for him to enter, Mr. Lincoln went back again to his law office.

While, up to the age of fifty-two, Mr. Lincoln's life was full of disappointments, and, in the sense of achieving success, a failure, he was going through a course of discipline which prepared him for the greatest responsibilities that were ever undertaken by a human being. His great life work was performed in four years. Fifty-two years of preparation for four years of service! In this regard his life has no parallel except that presented in the life of the lowly Galilean.

#### SENATOR DOUGLAS'S BRILLIANT CAREER.

Senator Douglas's whole life had been made up of successes and triumphs. "In the bright vocabulary" of his life "there had been no such word as fail."

At twenty years of age, alone and friendless, he walked into the town of Winchester, Scott county, Illinois, and almost immediately entered upon a career of success and achievement, which continued during his whole life.

Ten years from that day, when he walked into Winchester, at thirty years of age, he had been a member of the Illinois legislature, state's attorney, register of the land office at Springfield, secretary of state for Illinois, judge of the supreme court of Illinois, and was on his way to Washington to take his seat in

congress, to which he had been elected. He was elected and re-elected three successive times to the lower house, but in 1847, at thirty-four years of age, before entering upon his third term in the house, he was elected to the United States senate, and in 1853, six years later, was re-elected without serious opposition.

Twice, in national conventions of his party, he had been a candidate for president.

He had been prominently connected with all the great measures before congress from the time he became a member, notably the compromise measures of 1850, the Oregon boundary question, the legislation relating to the Mexican war, the Clayton and Bulwer treaty, the Kansas-Nebraska bill, and the contest over the Lecompton constitution. One of the most important measures he carried through congress was that chartering the Illinois Central Railway, appropriating a large grant of land for its construction. In this charter it was provided that, in consideration of the vast grant of land, the railway company should pay into the treasury of Illinois 7 per cent of its gross earnings, a precedent that should have been, but was not, followed by subsequent land grants by congress.

#### DOUGLAS' GALLANT FIGHT FOR POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY.

Five years had rolled around since the barrier against slavery had been removed. Kansas was knocking at the doors of congress to be admitted as a state. A constitution had been adopted at Lecompton by a small coterie of pro-slavery men. If admitted under that constitution the curse of human slavery would have been imposed upon that commonwealth. The Democratic administration sought to impose the constitution upon the people. Then came the test. Senator Douglas had proclaimed popular sovereignty from every stump in Illinois, declaring that, while he cared not whether slavery was voted down or voted up, the will of the people of a territory should govern; that if they voted to establish slavery it should be established; if they voted against slavery the territory should be free. Would Senator Douglas stand by the principle of popular sovereignty and

favor the admission of Kansas as a free state? To oppose a policy of forcing slavery upon the people of Kansas against their will would involve breaking with Mr. Buchanan and his being ostracized by the administration. To do so would involve a bitter, relentless war by the administration upon every one of Senator Douglas's friends, and drive them from office. Senator Douglas grandly stood by the principles he had proclaimed.

#### WENT TO WHITE HOUSE.

On the 5th of December when congress met, the great senator at once went to the White House. He told the president, Mr. Buchanan, that the Lecompton constitution did not express the will of the people of Kansas, and, if he recommended its adoption he (Douglas) would fight it in congress. Mr. Buchanan, who was entirely under the domination of the slave power, declared that he would exercise all the power of the administration to have Kansas admitted under the Lecompton constitution, which meant cramming slavery down the throats of the people against their will; and warned the senator against opposing him, declaring that no Democrat ever yet differed with an administration of his choice, without being crushed. Douglas replied that he would denounce the Lecompton constitution in the senate, exclaiming: "Mr. President, I wish you to remember that General Jackson is dead!" and withdrew.

In the annals of American statesmanship scarcely anything can be found so heroic as the fight of Senator Douglas for the principle of popular sovereignty, in his war upon the Lecompton constitution. He had done more for the election of Mr. Buchanan than any man living. He had carried his own and several other states for him. The platform upon which Mr. Buchanan was elected was made from the principles he had enunciated. He then controlled all the patronage of his own state and in a greater degree than any other public man the patronage of the country. To break with the administration would deprive him of this influence and drive every friend he



had from public position. But he had given his word that whichever way the people of a territory voted the principle of popular sovereignty should be maintained, and the will of the people should be carried into effect. He did not hesitate. He did not falter. He fought as he had never fought before, and did not rest until the Leecompton constitution was buried out of sight. I know of no more interesting chapter in American history than that which tells of the long, able, courageous and successful struggle of Senator Douglas against the Leecompton constitution.

His second term in the senate was about to expire. Surely after such a heroic struggle the people of Illinois would not turn against their great senator, whose name was a household word in every city and wilderness of the land.

#### REPUBLICANS ADVISED TO SUPPORT HIM.

Republicans outside of Illinois advised that no other candidate be considered. Horace Greeley, in the New York Tribune, the leading Republican paper of the country, advised this. But Senator Douglas had declared that he "cared not whether slavery was voted down or voted up." He had declared that had the people of Kansas favored slavery, he would have, with just the same earnestness, favored her admission under a constitution of their choice, adding another slave state to the union.

The Republicans of Illinois had planted themselves upon the principle of "no more slave states." Whatever a territory might do, however she voted, they would not consent that she be permitted to come into the union as a slave state. This was the fundamental principle upon which the Republican party was founded.

Outside of Illinois comparatively few had ever heard of Mr. Lincoln. If Mr. Greeley had heard his name, he did not at all consider him.

Senator Douglas came home as a candidate for re-election,

with all the eclat and glory of his success in defeating the Le-compton constitution. He had demonstrated to his countrymen that he was loyal to the principle of "popular sovereignty," that he was able to vindicate it in congress, and that no power could cope with him or withstand him in the national legislature. With such a record he went before the people of Illinois confident of an easy victory.

SENATOR DOUGLAS NOT PERMITTED TO DICTATE ISSUE OF CAMPAIGN.

But Senator Douglas was not permitted to dictate the issue upon which the campaign was to be conducted.

Just before he came home the most startling and far-reaching proposition that had ever been enunciated since the foundation of the government was proclaimed,—a declaration that was so simple and so clear and so conclusive that it was a marvel that it had not been announced before. It was: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe that this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect that the union will be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect that it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind will rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the states old as well as new—north as well as south."

#### A MATTER OF WONDER.

It is a matter of wonder that some such sentiment had not been expressed by Hamilton or Madison or Jay, or by Marshall, or by the hitherto greatest expounder of the constitution, Daniel Webster, and that it remained for a comparatively obscure Illinois lawyer to apprehend it and give expression to it.

It remained for Abraham Lincoln, in the quiet of his law office at Springfield, to evolve the mighty conception. That law office had become an eyre, a mountain summit, so to speak,

from whose sublime heights the whole history and experiences of the nation were passed in review, and from which he was able to pierce the veil of the future, and from what had been, see what must be,—to “look before and after.”

Rising far above the politics and the statesmanship of his day, Abraham Lincoln had become a philosopher and a seer. After making this wonderful declaration, he proceeded to show by a most ingenious and forcible presentation of facts that the nation was tending to a condition which would result, unless the tide was turned, in its becoming “all slave.” One of his strongest arguments in proof of this was based upon the Dred Scott decision, and the attitude of Senator Douglas in indorsing it. This brought that decision prominently into the discussions.

#### VAINLY TRIED TO ANSWER.

From that day forward, in all of his speeches during the great campaign and afterwards, Senator Douglas quoted the sentiment expressed by Mr. Lincoln and vainly tried to answer it.

Senator Douglas arrived in Chicago on the 9th of July, where he had a royal welcome and reception, and spoke on that evening.

Mr. Lincoln went up to hear him, and by invitation occupied a prominent seat upon the platform.

#### DEBATE BEGAN IN CHICAGO.

It may properly be said that then and there the debates began. The next evening, Mr. Lincoln, in Chicago, replied to the senator, and from that time forward, at different places—Bloomington, Springfield and others—they spoke, following and answering each other.

Mr. Lincoln attended several of Senator Douglas's meetings, where he was treated with the utmost courtesy, but Senator Douglas attended none of his. Thousands of Republicans attended Senator Douglas's meetings, but very few Democrats

attended Mr. Lincoln's meetings. The fact was, Senator Douglas was so famous that everybody rushed to see and hear him whenever he appeared.

Mr. Lincoln chafed under this condition of things. He wanted to reach the Democrats. He finally concluded that the only possible way for him to do so was by speaking from the same platform with his opponent, and so he challenged the great senator to a series of joint debates, face to face.

Senator Douglas replied, accepting the challenge for seven joint debates, and designated the times and places where they were held, as follows:

Ottawa—August 21st.

Freeport—August 27th.

Jonesboro—September 15th.

Charleston—September 18th.

Galesburg—October 7th.

Quincy—October 13th.

Alton—October 15th.

#### SENATOR DOUGLAS'S GREAT RECEPTION IN CHICAGO.

The crowd that turned out to greet Senator Douglas on that evening of the 9th of July was enormous. Never before had the people of Chicago turned out in such vast numbers to greet any human being. Never was another human being so enthusiastically applauded. Republicans and Democrats alike joined in the glad acclaim.

Never did a politician turn a demonstration so adroitly to his advantage by making it an indorsement of all his public acts, and to an expression of approval of his entire public career.

When he came home from congress four years before, after he had been the means of repealing the Missouri compromise, and of breaking down the great barrier against slavery, Senator Douglas was greeted by a great crowd, but with taunts and jeers instead of expressions of approval. When he then essayed to speak his voice was drowned with hisses and catcalls,

and denunciations, and curses. He stood for hours before that outraged mass of people, vainly endeavoring to be heard. He tried all the arts of the trained public speaker of which he was a master. He appealed, begged and threatened, sought to amuse and to awaken a feeling of sympathy, but it was all of no avail. The people had assembled to denounce him and they would not permit him to speak. It was Saturday night and he struggled until midnight. When the clock struck the hour that ushered in the Sabbath he exclaimed: "It is Sunday, I will go to church, and you may go to hell!" and withdrew. He said afterwards that after the repeal of the Missouri compromise he could have traveled by the light of his own burning effigies all the way from Boston to Chicago.

Senator Douglas, as has been said, made the most of this great ovation, so different from that of four years before. After referring to "this vast sea of human faces," "a reception like this, so great in numbers that no human voice can be heard by its countless thousands," he modestly declared that he "had not the vanity to believe that it was any personal compliment" to him, and then he proceeded to claim it all as an indorsement of the principle of "popular sovereignty," which he represented, and by inference, that it was an indorsement of the Nebraska bill, which they had so bitterly opposed. He then gave a graphic account of the struggle in congress to defeat the Lecompton constitution. He acknowledged the services of the Republicans in coming to his support, and claimed that, by this action, they sustained the principle of leaving the question of slavery or freedom to the people of the territory, as laid down in his Nebraska bill, exclaiming that, "I regard the great principle of popular sovereignty as having been vindicated and made triumphant in this land."

He read a resolution passed in the Illinois legislature seven years before, expressing the sentiment that the people of a territory should govern themselves, and claimed that resolution was an instruction from the people of Illinois for

him to favor the Nebraska bill and repeal the Missouri compromise.

He then took up Mr. Lincoln's Springfield speech, in which he declared that this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free, and asserted that by this "Mr. Lincoln advocates boldly and clearly a war of sections, a war of the North against the South; of the free states against the slave states—a war of extermination, to be continued relentlessly until one or the other shall be subdued, and all the states shall either become free or become slave."

He then argued that Lincoln's doctrine meant "uniformity" in all the states, and claimed that this of all others was the thing that the framers of the constitution sought to avoid; that on account of the differences of soil and climate, the laws and domestic institutions which suited one state in a republic as large as ours must be entirely different from those of another—"Different laws to govern the granite hills of New Hampshire, the rice fields of the Carolinas, the agricultural regions of New York and Pennsylvania, the mining regions of the Pacific coast, and the lumber regions of Maine." Each locality he declared having separate and distinct interests required separate and distinct laws. "Uniformity," he declared, "in local and domestic affairs would be destructive of state rights, of state sovereignty, of personal liberty, and personal freedom. \* \* \* Uniformity is the parent of despotism the world over, not only in politics but in religion. Whenever you declare that all states must be free or slave, all labor must be white or black, you have destroyed the greatest safeguard of our institutions."

It is impossible to give the whole argument of Senator Douglas upon this matter, which was extended and exhaustive, and apparently conclusive.

He then took up the Dred Scott case, and stated that Mr. Lincoln was making war upon the supreme court, and claimed that no citizen had a right to question its decisions, declaring

that "as a lawyer I feel at liberty to appear before the court and controvert any principle of law, while the question is pending before the tribunal; but, when the decision is made, my private opinion, your opinion, and all other opinions, must yield to the majesty of that authoritative adjudication," exclaiming: "What security have you for your property, for your reputation, and for your personal rights, if the courts are not upheld?"

After further extended remarks upon the sacredness of judicial opinions, and declaring that he had "no disposition to appeal from the supreme court to a town meeting," the senator told of an eminent Illinois lawyer who used to say that the only defect in our state judicial system could be cured by giving the privilege of taking an appeal, on all constitutional questions, from the supreme court to a justice of the peace, whereupon Mr. Lincoln, who sat behind him, called out in an audible whisper: "Judge, judge, judge! That was when you were on our supreme bench!"

The joke was so good that the senator repeated it to the audience.

Upon thus taking the position that no one had a right to differ with any question or opinion of the supreme court, after it had been announced from the bench, the senator proceeded to state the substance of that opinion, which was that it denied citizenship to the negro, and expressed his unqualified indorsement of the sentiment, declaring: "I am opposed to negro equality. \* \* \* This government of ours is founded on the white basis. It was made for white men, for the benefit of white men, to be administered by white men," and argued that giving the negro citizenship would bring about amalgamation of the two races, which would result in the deterioration of both, as was the case in Mexico, and in all the Spanish-American countries. He declared that the sentiment "All men are created equal" did not and was not intended to apply to the negro. The senator charged that the Republicans had

made an alliance, "an unholy, unnatural alliance," with the federal office holders (who had been appointed by President Buchanan as the senator's friends were turned out) and said that the Russians, before Sebastopol, when they fired a broadside against the common enemy, did not stop to inquire whether it hit a Frenchman, an Englishman or a Turk—and so in this campaign, he would not stop to inquire whether his blows hit the Republican leaders or their allies.

He concluded by again expressing his appreciation of the enthusiastic reception he had received, declaring that "This welcome has amply repaid me for every effort I have made in the public service during the twenty-five years I have held office at your hands."

#### GIVES GENERAL IDEA.

This Chicago address, as was intended by the senator, gives a general idea of his position and his line of argument through the entire campaign. It placed him squarely before the people of the state, and his views were so plainly and frankly expressed that there was no mistaking them. His statement of his position and his line of argument was a complete and full outline or forecast of all that followed in his speeches throughout the debates. In every political campaign there are certain salient principles and lines of argument which are uppermost, and necessarily must be constantly put forward and kept to the front, while there is diversity in the matter of treating them. This is as marked in the Lincoln-Douglas campaign as in any other. The giving of a summary of Senator Douglas's Chicago address is practically to outline his position during the entire campaign.

Through his address and through most of the campaign the senator assumed toward Mr. Lincoln a lofty, patronizing air, and through the earlier part of the campaign he attempted, whenever opportunity offered, to "damn him with faint praise."

In this address he spoke of Mr. Lincoln as a "kind, amiable and intelligent gentleman, a good citizen and an honorable op-



ponent," but gave no recognition of him as a man of more than ordinary ability. Time and again as the campaign proceeded he assumed this patronizing air, and several times repeated substantially this remark we have quoted.

Mr. Lincoln, on the other hand, always recognized the great ability of the senator, the majesty of his power and the fame he had achieved.

On the next evening, as has been said, Mr. Lincoln replied to Senator Douglas before a large audience, but of course there was no such spontaneous outpouring of the people as that which welcomed the senator. It must be admitted that the Republicans had misgivings as to whether their champion was able to cope with the great senator.

Mr. Lincoln was in a cheerful mood. He began where Douglas left off by referring to the comparison Douglas made between his own blows, in which he would be indifferent as to whether they would fall upon Republicans or their allies, as the Russians cared not whether their broadsides hit a Frenchman, an Englishman or a Turk. "Just to think of it," exclaimed Mr. Lincoln, "right at the outset of the canvass, I, a poor, kind, amiable, intelligent gentleman, am to be slain in this way! \*

\* \* I beg that he will indulge us while we barely suggest to him that those allies took Sebastopol."

Mr. Lincoln then took up the matter of popular sovereignty—"everlasting popular sovereignty," and argued that it was a delusion and a fraud. It was first called "squatter sovereignty," which meant if anything that the squatters, the settlers, could, if they tried, keep slavery out of a territory, but that under the Dred Scott decision anybody could take slavery into a territory, yet, while a territory, all the rest of the people, all the squatters, could not drive it out, and argued from this that after all the squatters or settlers had no sovereignty at all.

He gave credit to the senator for his fight against forcing slavery upon the people of Kansas by a state constitution, against their will, and declared that the Republicans had been making

just such a fight all the time, and would have made this fight had Douglas not been in it at all—that in the senate, for the defeat of the Lecompton constitution the Democrats furnished just three votes, including that of Senator Douglas, and the Republicans furnished twenty votes, and in the house the Democrats furnished some twenty votes, while the Republicans furnished ninety odd. The proportion of opposition to that measure among the Republicans and Democrats, he declared, was about five to one. Mr. Lincoln asked why all the credit for defeating the infamy should be given to Senator Douglas, and asked why some credit was not given to Senator Trumbull, who made as gallant a fight as Douglas.

Mr. Lincoln then took up Douglas's charge that he was committed by his "house divided against itself" speech to a "war of sections—of the south against the north—a war of extermination until there should be uniformity in everything," and argued that no such inference could fairly be made from what he said; that he did not declare in favor of making the country all slave or all free, but that he predicted that such a result must come, and so far from proposing to interfere with slavery where it then existed, he had simply suggested that the opponents of slavery should arrest the spread of it, and place it where the public mind will rest in the belief of its ultimate extinction. To arrest the spread of slavery is, he said, a very different thing from making a war of extermination upon the south.

Mr. Lincoln said that Senator Douglas assumed from the beginning that he was the champion of the white man, while he (Lincoln) was the champion of the negro—that because he (Lincoln) contended that the sentiment in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal" did apply to the negro from this, the senator sought to make it appear that he was for making a war upon the south. Mr. Lincoln, however, did not allow himself to be swerved from or mistaken in his position that his opposition to slavery was simply confined to

arresting the spread of it, in order that with this accomplished, the public mind might rest in the belief of its ultimate extinction. He claimed that the fathers rested in this belief, for they expected slavery soon to be abolished, as was proved by their abolishing the slave trade, and dedicating the Northwest territory to freedom, and that the nation rested in this belief until Senator Douglas overturned the great barrier against slavery, the Missouri compromise line, which necessitated an earnest, united and determined effort to arrest its spread.

#### ALWAYS HATED SLAVERY.

"I have always hated slavery," said Mr. Lincoln. "I consider it a great moral evil to hold one-sixth of the population in bondage; but until the overthrow of the Missouri compromise line, I have kept quiet about it. Now I and the Republican party propose, by arresting the spread of it, to place it where the public mind will rest in the belief of its ultimate extinction, and thus finally get rid of it altogether. We know that we cannot, under the constitution, go into a state where it exists and interfere with it, and we have no disposition to do so. I have said a hundred times, and Judge Douglas has heard me say it, that I believe there is no right and ought to be no inclination of the people of the free states to enter into the slave states and interfere with the question at all, and now have no inclination to take it back.

"There is no justice in the claim of Senator Douglas that because we hate slavery and want to get rid of it through confining it to its present limits, we propose to wage a war of extermination upon the south. I protest now and forever against that counterfeit logic that presumes that because I do not want a negro woman for a slave I do necessarily want her for a wife. The judge regales us with the terrible enormities that take place through a mixture of the races. Why, judge, if we do not let them get together in the territories they won't mix there."

In regard to the Dred Scot decision Mr. Lincoln discussed

the question of how we can properly treat a matter that has been passed upon and an opinion promulgated by the courts. He showed by an extended argument that, while one must obey the decision as to Dred Scott, the property involved, he may with perfect propriety differ from the court in its opinion, and cited the case of General Jackson's refusal to obey the mandate of the court in deciding the National Bank constitutional, and with great force he showed that Senator Douglas himself, when the supreme court of Illinois decided that a governor could not remove the secretary of state, was in favor of "oversloughing" that decision by adding five new judges to vote down the four old ones, which resulted in Mr. Douglas himself sitting down on that very bench as one of the five new judges to break down the four old ones. "He is bespattered all over, from the beginning of his political life to the present time," exclaimed Mr. Lincoln, "with opposition to judicial decisions."

Mr. Lincoln at first seriously apprehended, on account of his gallant fight against the Lecompton constitution, that the senator might enlist the free soil men in his support. He warned Republicans that if they supported Douglas for Senator he would claim that thereby they indorsed all his acts, as he now claims that the Illinois legislature, by a certain resolution, instructed him to introduce the Nebraska bill, when nobody in that legislature ever thought of such a thing. "The senator claims that by giving him such a grand reception in Chicago, on account of his opposition to the Lecompton constitution, the people of Illinois indorsed all his political acts, the Nebraska bill and all.

"If you Republicans indorse him by your votes you tell him you do not care whether slavery be voted up or down..  
\* \* \* You stand ready, saddled and bridled and harnessed, to be driven over to the pro-slavery camp of the nation."

It is impossible without going far beyond the time allowed for the consideration of this subject to go into further details. Sufficient, it is hoped, has been said to show the positions assumed by the great contestants and their lines of argument.

## JUSTICE TO BOTH LINCOLN AND DOUGLAS.

Duty to both Mr. Lincoln and Senator Douglas requires that in an address upon this subject especial attention be given in regard to some misapprehensions in regard to the Freeport debate. In that debate Mr. Lincoln propounded to Senator Douglas four questions, among which was the following:

Second, "Can the people of a United States territory, in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a state constitution?"

It has been repeatedly stated and has been generally believed that by this question Mr. Lincoln drove Senator Douglas into a corner and forced him, in order to have any possible hope of re-election, to say what he would not have said, unless so "driven into a corner."

It has been said that before that debate Mr. Lincoln read this question to friends and that they advised him by all means not to propound it, because they urged that if he did, Senator Douglas would in some plausible way show that the people of a territory could, notwithstanding the Dred Scott decision, exclude slavery, and that, if he so answered he would be elected to the senate, and he, Mr. Lincoln, would be defeated. It is stated that, in reply to this warning, Mr. Lincoln said: "I am looking for larger game. If Senator Douglas so answers, it will drive the south from his support and defeat him for the presidency." I have seen it stated that such a conversation was held at Mendota; also that such a conversation occurred on the railway train, when approaching Freeport, and that such a conversation was held at Freeport before the debate. The statements in regard to these conversations are made by men entirely worthy of credence.

Mr. Lincoln, as has been said, asked the question. Senator Douglas replied by saying: "I answer emphatically, as Mr. Lincoln has heard me a hundred times from every stump in

Illinois, that, in my opinion, the people of a territory can, by lawful means, exclude slavery from their limits, prior to the formation of a state constitution. \* \* \*

“It matters not what way the supreme court may hereafter decide, as to the abstract question whether slavery may or may not go into a territory. Under the constitution the people have the lawful means to introduce it, or exclude it, as they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day, or an hour anywhere, unless it is supported by local police regulations. Those police regulations can only be established by the legislature, and if the people are opposed to slavery, they will elect representatives to that body who will, by unfriendly legislation, effectually prevent the introduction of it into their midst.”

We now have before us both Mr. Lincoln’s question and Senator Douglas’s reply.

It was stated, as has been said, that Mr. Lincoln drove Senator Douglas into a corner and forced him to make that reply, as the only possible way to save himself from defeat and that he was thus “driven into a corner” and forced to make that reply by Mr. Lincoln for the purpose of defeating him for the presidency.

On the 16th day of July, six weeks before this Freeport debate, Senator Douglas spoke at Bloomington and the speech was published and spread broadcast. Mr. Lincoln was present, sat upon the platform and heard every word. It was the Senator’s own meeting and there was no one to reply, no one to ask him a question, no one to drive him into a corner or to force him to make a statement in order to save himself from defeat. In that speech, before thousands of people, including Mr. Lincoln, Senator Douglas said:

“Slavery will never exist one day, or one hour, in any territory against the unfriendly legislation of an unfriendly people. I care not how the Dred Scott discussion may have settled the abstract question, so far as the practical result is concerned, for to use the language of an eminent southern senator on this question:

“I do not care a fig which way the decision shall be, for it is of no particular consequence; slavery cannot exist a day, nor an hour, in any territory or state, unless it has affirmative laws sustaining and supporting it, furnishing police regulations and remedies, and an omission to furnish them would be as fatal as a constitutional prohibition. Without affirmative legislation in its favor, slavery could not exist any longer than a new born infant could survive under the heat of the sun on a barren rock without protection.”

After making this quotation from “an eminent southern senator” Douglas proceeded. “Hence, if the people of a territory want slavery they will encourage it, by passing affirmative laws and the necessary police regulations, patrol laws and slave code; if they do not want it, they will withhold that legislation and by withholding it slavery is as dead as if it was prohibited by a constitutional prohibition, especially if, in addition, their legislation is unfriendly as it would be if they were opposed to it.”

On the next day Senator Douglas spoke in Springfield and repeated what he had said upon this question at Bloomington. Mr. Lincoln was not present; but the speech was published in full and Mr. Lincoln, no doubt, read it as he read everything said by the senator.

Can any one believe for a moment that Mr. Lincoln, after hearing Senator Douglas so expound this doctrine, was in doubt as to how he would answer that second interrogatory? Can any one believe that he thought he was driving his adversary into a corner and forcing him to say what he did, in order to save himself from defeat? Can any one believe Abraham Lincoln to have been so insincere as to have pretended, when talking with friends at Mendota, upon a railway train, or at Freeport, that he was in doubt as to Senator Douglas’s position, or that he could drive him into a corner?

Senator Douglas was never driven into a corner during all his long career of public life. In all his debates with the great-

est of American statesmen, running through a quarter of a century, he was never driven into a corner. His views in regard to slavery were wrong, radically wrong, as we Republicans then believed, and we still believe, but there was no concealment of them. He was always outspoken and it is unwarrantable and outrageous imputation against him to say that he was forced to take a position through being "driven into a corner."

But the question may be asked why did Mr. Lincoln propound that second interrogatory? Why, if he knew precisely what Mr. Douglas's answer would be, did he ask him the second question?

It is not necessary to state before an association made up of the highest and most respected judges of our courts and of the ablest and most prominent members of our bar, that in order to make up and complete the record in a cause it is not uncommon for an interrogatory to be propounded when there is no question as to what will be the answer. If we had the time to study all of these four questions it would be seen that no one could have been omitted.

If it be asked how can you take issue with men, entirely worthy of credence, as to Mr. Lincoln's conversations, I reply that I simply quote from Senator Douglas' speeches published soon after the debates were held by authorization of Mr. Lincoln, and make conclusions that seem to me to be irresistible.

I will add that my own recollections confirm me in these conclusions. I was speaking during the campaign for Mr. Lincoln and against Senator Douglas. I read Senator Douglas's Bloomington speech which was published in all the newspapers, at the time, and commented upon it.

I will say further that, in my opinion, the views expressed by Senator Douglas at Bloomington, Springfield and Freeport, in regard to this matter had very little effect upon the question of his nomination for the presidency. He had already driven the south from his support. He had fought the Lecompton constitution all the winter before, in congress, and was already de-



nounced in unmeasured terms by the whole southern representation in congress, and the administration was already making war upon him by removing from office every friend and supporter he had.

#### INTENSE INTEREST SHOWN.

Never in Illinois was there such interest in public meetings as on those when Lincoln and Douglas met face to face. There was plenty of time to give notice and all the people within a radius of fifty miles of the places where each debate was held were aroused. The fact that the masses of both political parties assembled insured a vast crowd. Organizations were made by both parties at every town and hamlet to get up processions and insure the largest possible attendance. Some of their processions were more than a mile long. All the debates were held in the open air.

It was a curious sight to look upon, when the vast crowd of earnest men of both parties were wedged in together before the grand stand. There was the usual jostling and crowding to get good places. There was taunting and jeering between the representatives of both parties, but very few breaches of the peace. When the speaking began there was almost perfect order. If the pent up feeling of either party caused an angry demonstration, their representative on the platform would rise and beg his friends to desist. When they applauded a speaker he would beg them to cease, as it would be taken out of his time.

It was striking to see the two champions ascend the platform, usually together: Lincoln so tall and angular, and Douglas so short and sturdy. There was a presiding officer who introduced the speaker, but the meeting to a great degree controlled by the timekeepers, who were made up from both parties.

Those timekeepers were inexorable. The speakers alternated in opening and closing at the different places. At the moment the time for the opening arrived the first speaker must begin. A speaker was given an hour for his opening, then his competitor had an hour and a half and he who opened was given

half an hour to close. Time was called at the moment when the speaker was to conclude and he could only finish the sentence he was upon, and was not permitted to begin upon another.

#### HOW DOUGLAS APPEARED.

In speaking Douglas stood firm upon his feet, moving very little. He was, although so short, dignified and stately. Small as he was he seemed sometimes majestic. Had he been so large in stature, his figure would have been as imposing as was that of Webster. One writer in describing him has said that the expression of his face suggested the infinite.

His voice was a deep bass and had a great carrying power by which he was able to reach a vast multitude. Each word, distinctly uttered, was projected out from his deep chest as if fired from a Columbiad. He was positive, bold and aggressive, and assertive.

Lincoln declared that the government must become all free or all slave; therefore Lincoln was sectional and favored a war of extermination. He expected that the government would become all one thing or all the other; therefore he insisted upon uniformity, that the same laws and conditions should rule in every state; therefore he was for the overthrowing of state rights, and of making every community conform to the customs of every other community! Lincoln refused to obey the mandate of the supreme court in the Dred Scott case, therefore Lincoln sought to bring the people into a feeling of contempt for the courts and to break down our system of jurisprudence. Lincoln believed that the sentiment "all men are created equal" was intended to apply to the negro; therefore Lincoln favored negroes above white men, favored amalgamation and miscegenation with the negro.

#### HOW LINCOLN APPEARED.

Lincoln was angular and raw-boned, his limbs long. He was gaunt of body, his neck long, his cheek-bones high, his features irregular, his arching eye-brows overshadowing. He was regarded as a very homely man, but upon occasions when he

arose to the full apprehension of a subject in which he was interested all the rugged inequalities of his frame and features combined to make his appearance majestic and even sublime.

His voice was keyed upon rather a high pitch, clear, but not shrill, and his ringing tones reached even more than did the deeper notes of Douglas.

He was, until he warmed into his subject, apologetic. He seemed frequently to have misgivings as to whether he was a proper man to be pitted against the distinguished senator, and that he could only bring himself to attempt to answer him by his appreciation of the importance of the questions involved. His whole manner indicated candor and sincerity. He appealed to his hearers, asking them questions and apparently taking them into his confidence, seeming to consult and advise with them, all the time giving the impression that he had doubts as to whether, after all, the senator was not right, and if upon discussing the question being considered it should appear that he himself was in the wrong he would be the first to acknowledge it. He would, as the lawyers say, file a demurrer, the best definition of which is: "What of it?"—that is, Suppose that this declaration of the senator is true, what does it all amount to? And then he would reason it out and show how little there was in it.

Every assertion of Senator Douglas was tested in the crucible of the analysis of Mr. Lincoln and when it came out it was estimated at precisely what it was worth and no more.

Curiously, one will look in vain through all the debates for a high-sounding period. There were no ornaments of rhetoric, no passages that are sought for repetition or declamation. In these regards those speeches bear no comparison with those of Burke or Pitt and Fox and Brougham, or with those of Webster and Everett and Phillips and Ingersoll. But, in close reasoning, in the logic that leads to irresistible conclusions, the speeches of Lincoln and Douglas surpass any that have ever been promulgated.

When the debates were first entered upon, men outside of

Illinois asked, Who is this man Lincoln? and marveled that he could have the temerity to attempt to meet such a colossal character as the great senator. At first his speeches were only published in the Illinois papers. As the debates went on the whole nation became intensely interested and the speeches of both were telegraphed to all the leading journals of the country and were taken up with avidity and read from ocean to ocean. In every house and store and shop and mill men were found reading and discussing them.

“Did you see how Lincoln turned the tables on ‘the Little Giant’ with the Dred Scott decision?” asked one. “Read it! Read it aloud!” was the response. “See how Douglas answered him,” cried another, and it was read. “The ‘Little Giant’ is too much for your Springfield lawyer,” said one.

“The ‘Little Giant’ has found his match!” another responded. “It’s all very well for Lincoln to talk his abolition sentiments in Northern Illinois,” said the Douglas men, after the Ottawa and Freeport debates. “You just wait until the ‘Little Giant’ trots him down into Egypt and you’ll laugh out of the other side of your mouth.”

The interest in the discussions became so great that men forgot what position the two champions were contending for. The result of the campaign was that, while Lincoln carried the state on the popular vote, Douglas carried a majority of the Legislature. Douglas was elected and, as he had done so many times before, Mr. Lincoln went back to his law office.

It is curious that midway between the organization of the Republican party and its final triumph the two ablest men in the country should have before the whole people discussed the issues upon which their weal or woe depended.

It may be said of the Lincoln-Douglas debates that the ablest men in the nation were the champions, that the great prairies were the audience room, that the whole American people was the audience, that the constitution of the United States was the platform, and that, upon the elucidation and final solution of the problems involved depended the fate of a continent.





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